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To: President Bill Clinton
Senators and Representatives, US Congress
W. R. Dixon, US DOE

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A major environmental issue has recently been brought to my attention, that of the Yucca Mountain Project for the disposal of nuclear waste. The proposal for the project blatantly ignores scientific data that indicates the location of the repository is a poor choice. In addition, methods for transporting the waste, and procedures for building the facility put civilians and workers in grave danger of receiving large amounts of radiation, not to mention the destruction it could cause to the environment and ecosystem.

I do not own Ph.D's in geology or chemistry, nor am I an expert of any kind on nuclear waste treatment. I am only an intelligent student with a love of science. It is this love of science that causes me to feel utter disgust to see it being performed so poorly in regards to the Yucca Mountain Project. Construction of this facility would be like setting an environmental time bomb that would very slowly tick away, and eventually wreak havoc on our descendents. In the name of science and ethics, I challenge anyone in a position of authority to take the initiative to stop this facility from being built. Thank you.

Logical Problems with the Proposed Yucca Mountain Project

- 2 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement by the Department of Energy for the Yucca Mountain Project is filled with both logical and scientific fallacies. A review of the EIS will show that little concern for the validity of the conclusions was given. It uses poor science and dangerous assumptions to determine that the Yucca Mountain is an adequate location for a repository.
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- 3 1. Predictions and assumptions about the repository's effectiveness in safely storing the nuclear waste cannot be entirely accurate because the structural design of the repository is not finished. The EIS explicitly states that "... the current level of repository design is insufficient to meet informational needs for a License Application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission . . . the design will continue to evolve"(DEIS, S-20). Therefore, the project should not and cannot be approved or begin construction until the final design of the structure is in place.
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- 4 2. Statements about the unlikelihood of nuclear waste contaminating ground water because of the dry, dusty climate in the Yucca Mountain are incorrect when the effects of a climate change are taken into consideration. Since the 1970's the global temperature has continued to increase, and the 1990's has been the hottest decade ever. Should this increase continue, the possibility of polar ice melting also increases, which would raise the water level, possibly into the level of the repository where contamination would occur. In addition, a sudden, rapid climate change even within the next ten years could raise the water table within dangerous proximity of the repository.
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- 5 3. The passive controls that would be initiated after the repository are insufficient to guarantee the safety of the surrounding population. No supervision of the activities around the repository creates a dangerous situation that fosters the possibility of homegrown and foreign terrorism.
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- 6 4. It is impossible to guarantee the safety and functionality of the storage canisters over the long term in regards the construction of the canisters. Primarily, the actual canisters have not been built yet. Only blueprints exist from which the DOE has made predictions. In addition, seismic events or corrosion and destruction of the surrounding rock by the intense heat from the decaying fuel could subject the canisters to extreme pressures or weights that could cause them to rupture. Faulty canister construction would also present the possibility of waste fuel contaminating the area.
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- 7 ... 5. Transportation of the spent fuel is an extremely dangerous undertaking because of the cataclysmic destruction it would cause to the surrounding area of the crash site and the high probability of there being an accident. There were 382,030 accidents involving heavy load trucks in 1997, an average of about 1,047 per day. When

- ⁷ | taken together with the fact that it would take over 23 years to move all the spent
| fuel to the repository, it is difficult to accept the idea that over that long time span,
| there will be no accidents involving a nuclear waste-carrying truck.
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WORKS REFERENCED

Yucca Mountain Project 2000. Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository. Yucca Mountain Project. Available:

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